

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1246

KUWAIT FOR BAGHDAD ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, IN

SUBJ: CONGRESS PARTY PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO SYRIA

REF: NEW DELHI 2074

1. CONGRESS PARTY PRESIDENT BAROOAH VISITED SYRIA
FEB 17-23 AT INVITATION BAATH PARTY NATIONAL COMMAND.
ACCOMPANYING HIM WERE SEC GEN OF PAN-INDIA COMMITTEE,
ABD AL-RAHMAN ANTOLAI; ARABIC PROFESSOR FROM NEHRU
UNIV., MUHAMMAD NIAR; AND BAROOAH'S PRIVATE SECRETARY,
KHALID ALFI. DELEGATION MET WITH PRES ASAD, PRIMIN
AYYUBI, PEOPLE'S COUNCIL SPEAKER HALABI, BAATH PARTY
DEP SEC GEN AHMAR, AND OTHERS. TALKS ALSO HELD WITH
CHAIRMAN PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL, KHALID AL-FAHUM.
DELEGATION VISITED KUNEITRA, EUPHRATES DAM, DAMASCUS
UNIVERSITY, BAATH PARTY SCHOOL FOR PARTY CADRES, AND
INDUSTRIAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES.

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2. INDIANS AND THEIR HOSTS ISSUED JOINT STATEMENT

AT CONCLUSION OF VISIT REFLECTING THEIR AGREEMENT ON NECESSITY FOR COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND SAFEGUARDING OF PALESTINIAN NATIONAL RIGHTS, POSITIVE NATURE OF SYRIAN EFFORTS TO STABILIZE LEBANON, CONDEMNATION OF U.S. VETO OF NON-ALIGNED DRAFT RESOLUTION ON PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN U.N. AND DENUNCIATION OF "ZIONIST RACISM," AND NEED FOR ENHANCED SOLIDARITY OF NON-ALIGNED NATIONS IN ORDER TO RESIST IMPERIALISM AND AID LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AROUND WORLD. DURING MEETING WITH PNC CHAIRMAN FAHUM, BAROOAH NOTED THAT INDIA WAS FIRST NATION TO DENOUNCE 1917 BALFOUR DECLARATION, AND REITERATED NECESSITY OF ACHIEVING COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND LEGITIMATE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS.

3. COMMENT: SYRIANS UNDOUBTEDLY PLEASED WITH PUBLIC REAFFIRMATION OF INDIAN MIDDLE EAST POSITION. DELEGATION SPENT MOST OF ITS TIME WITH BAATH PARTY OFFICIALS, HOWEVER, CONFIRMING REFTEL'S PROGNOSIS THAT PARTY MATTERS RATHER THAN AFFAIRS OF GOVERNMENT WOULD BE FOCAL POINT OF DISCUSSIONS. INDIAN EMBOFF TOLD US THAT TALKS CONCENTRATED ON GENERALITIES; ONLY SUBSTANCE WAS BROAD AGREEMENT ON FUTURE COOPERATION AND EXCHANGE OF VISITS BY PARTY OFFICIALS. HE MENTIONED THAT PRIME MOTIVATION OF VISIT WAS INDIAN DESIRE TO MAINTAIN BALANCE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH SYRIA AND IRAQ, RECALLING 1973 INDIAN VISIT TO BAGHDAD. HE SAID THAT BAROOAH HAD NOT BEEN REQUESTED TO CONDEMN SINAI ACCORD. HE CONCLUDED THAT TALKS HAD GONE WELL AND VISIT HAD GENERATED SOME GOODWILL.

4. IF BAROOAH LAUNCHED INTO ANTI-AMERICAN CRITICISMS (PARA 4 REFTEL), HIS HOSTS DID NOT REPORT THEM. ONLY SWIPE AT U.S., APART FROM A FEW STANDARD REFERENCES TO IMPERIALISM, WAS CRITICISM OF U.S. SECURITY COUNCIL VETO.
MURPHY

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